

Tips for Caregivers

Parents are the most influential people in a child's life. All others, though they may contribute significantly (teachers, scout leaders, coaches, other family and friends), are of secondary importance. Parents have the primary responsibility to serve as role models, to be a source of comfort and support, to nurture and to teach, as well as provide the necessities for their children. A major portion of these responsibilities is to ensure a safe environment and teach safe behaviors. Effectively done, these lessons will impact not just the child but the community as a whole. Below are just a few of the things parents can do to help:

- **Set a good example** - Install and maintain smoke alarms and fire extinguishers per manufacturers directions, and always use fire in a safe manner.
- **Take responsibility for fire safety** - Point out to your children the fire safety rules you follow throughout the day and discuss the dangers of fire.
- **Control access to fire** - Keep all ignition devices out of reach of children and teach them to notify an adult if they find them.
- **Identify telltale signs** - Check in waste baskets, under the beds, and in closets for burned matches or other evidence your child is misusing fire and, if you find evidence, react positively by using it as a teaching opportunity.
- **Develop a positive identity** - Children with positive self esteem are less likely to fall victim to peer pressure, and they tend to make better decisions and look towards their future.
- **Empower your child** - Teach your child a home escape plan, how to crawl low in smoke the importance of maintaining smoke alarms, and give them an understanding of situational awareness so they can provide *themselves* with a safe environment.
- **Provide boundaries** - Help your child understand responsible behaviors in various settings (home, school, neighborhood, etc.) and provide clear and consistent consequences for violating these rules.
- **Nurture and support** - A well nurtured child will seek advice and counsel prior to making decisions they don't fully understand, and they will show an interest in helping others.
- **Invest time in your child** - By committing time for them and making them your companion you help them acquire values such as integrity, honesty and responsibility.